

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Status of Claims:

Claims 4 and 11 are currently being cancelled.

Claims 2, 3, 5-7, 9, 10 and 12-16 are currently being amended.

No claims are currently being added.

This amendment and reply cancels and amends claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After canceling and amending the claims as set forth above, claims 2, 3, 5-7, 9, 10 and 12-16 are now pending in this application.

Request for entry of After-final Amendment and Reply:

It is respectfully requested that this After-final Amendment and Reply be considered and entered, since it places this application in condition for allowance based on the indications made in the final Office Action.

Indication of Allowable Subject Matter:

Applicant appreciates the indication in the Office Action that claims 15 and 16 would be allowed if amended to place those claims in independent form. By way of this amendment and reply, claims 15 and 16 have each been placed in independent form to include the features of their respective base claim and any intervening claims. Also, the remaining claims have been amended to depend from either claim 15 or claim 16. Thus, all of the presently pending claims are now in condition for allowance based on the indications made in the Office Action.

Claim Rejections – Prior Art:

In the Office Action, claims 2-7 and 9-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ito et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,725,384 to Ito et al. in view of

U.S. Patent No. 5,802,420 to Garr et al. Due to the cancellation of claims 4 and 11 and due to the changed dependencies of claims 2, 3, 5-7, 9, 10 and 12-14 so that they now depend from either allowable claim 15 or allowable claim 16, these rejections are now moot.

Conclusion:

Since all of the issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed in this Amendment and Reply, Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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